

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application in view of the above amendments and following remarks is requested. After entry of this amendment, claims 181-224 are pending in the application. Claims 91-180 are canceled, and claims 181-224 are added.

In the office action issued March 29, 2004, the examiner objects to claims 91-137 and 139-180 due to informalities; rejects claims 91-100 and 138-141 under 35 U.S.C. §102 as being anticipated by Gremellion, et al (US 3,710,472); and objects to claims 101-137 and 142-180 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, these claims being allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim Objections

The examiner objects to claims 91-137 and 139-180 due to various informalities. Applicant has canceled these claims. Added claims 181-224 have been reviewed and should omit such informality problems.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 102

The examiner rejects claims 91-100 and 138-141 under 35 U.S.C. §102 as being anticipated by Gremellion, et al (US 3,710,472). For reasons unrelated to the above-referenced rejection, applicant has canceled these claims and added claims 181-224.

Added claims 181-224 are patentable over Gremellion, as Gremellion does not teach or suggest the features of these claims. For instance, Gremellion does not teach or suggest at least the following for independent claim 181: 1) a lower or outer surface of at least one section forming two substantially coplanar working surfaces; 2) a conveyor arranged to be

driven in one direction along one working surface and in the opposite direction along the other working surface; and/or 3) a conveyor being provided with at least one tool adapted for interaction with a terrain surface.

Gremellion purportedly teaches a truck mounted, hydraulically powered multi-purpose construction unit for the underground contractor, and focuses on the following: 1) location of the boom at the right rear corner of the vehicle for maximum reach from the road shoulder; 2) simultaneous attachment of a trencher and bucket to the boom, with choice of operation between the trencher and bucket; and 3) cooperation of the bucket with a number of tools or implements, including operation of a pipe push rod via the bucket.

Accordingly, regarding independent claim 181, Gremellion fails to teach or suggest the formation of two substantially coplanar working surfaces from a lower or outer surface of at least one of two or more articulated sections, a conveyor arranged to be driven in one direction along one working surface and in the opposite direction along the other working surface, where the conveyor is provided with at least one tool adapted for interaction with a terrain surface.

Claims 182-224 depend either directly or indirectly from independent claim 181, and are allowable for at least the reasons mentioned above for claim 181. Applicant submits, however, that the dependent claims also independently define over the art of record.

Claims Added by this Response and Amendment

Claims 181-224 are added by this response and amendment to more completely cover certain aspects of applicant's invention. For at least the reasons mentioned above, each recite

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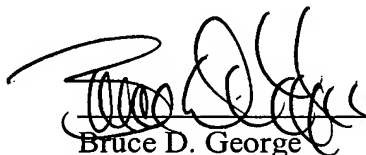
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elements patentable over the prior art. Claims 181-224 find support in portions of the specification including, but not limited to, page 2, line 23 through page 5, line 25.

CONCLUSION

In light of the above remarks, applicant submits that pending claims 181-224 (a total of 44 claims) are allowable and requests that examiner issue an early notice of allowance. The examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney in the event that a telephone interview will advance prosecution of this application.

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